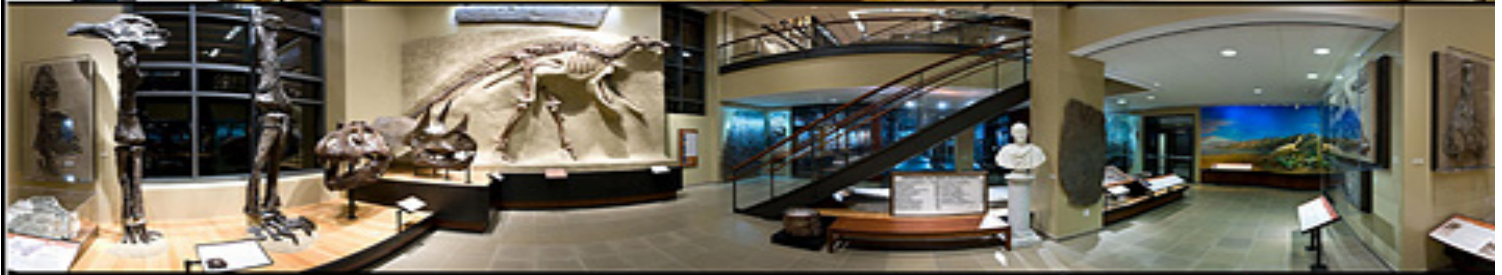


Lessons in Evolution

Hints for Teachers (High School & Beyond)



MUSEUM INFORMATION:

"Lessons in Evolution" is a worksheet to explore evolution through the many different examples in the Beneski Museum of Natural History.

- The museum does NOT provide copies of *Lessons in Evolution*. Please prepare copies for your students.
- The Beneski Museum of Natural History displays the fossil remains of many different creatures throughout different periods of life.
- While exploring the exhibition, encourage your students to look above their heads to see specimens displayed at different levels of the museum.
- The Beneski Museum of Natural History can accommodate up to 45 students and chaperones at a time. Please consider splitting into smaller sub-groups when completing the Lessons in Evolution activity.
- This lesson was designed as an extra-credit assignment; therefore, it can be used for a class assignment or an independent assignment.
- When your students arrive at the museum, they will be given a brief greeting by a museum staff member. After this greeting is a good time for you to talk to your students and chaperones about the *Lessons in Evolution* activity.

PREPARING AN ACTIVITY:

- *"Lessons in Evolution"* asks students to look critically at specimens and think in what ways did the animals change and what reasons pushed these evolutionary changes.
- The museum asks that students refrain from leaning on any of the glass cases while working. We recommend providing students with clipboards or notebooks to lean on.
- *"Lessons in Evolution"* has a brief set of directions printed at the top.

IN THE CLASSROOM:

- Make sure students have a basic idea of what to look at when they arrive. For some of the questions they will need a basic understanding of animal anatomy.
- Distinguish whether you would like your students to form complete sentences or not. The worksheet does not specify.
- Discuss with students noticeable evolutionary traits such as feet to hooves, to give students a more focused look.

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3. At the display of the Evolution of the Horse *on the main level*, note the changes in size, head shape, toe number, and leg bones. **Make a table for each species that illustrates how these features evolved over time.**

4. On the ground floor you will find a room filled with the largest collection of dinosaur tracks in the US. These tracks are from prehistoric animals that used to walk here in the Connecticut River Valley and they provide the first evidence of the existence of Dinosaurs in North America. **Walk through the room and observe the tracks. What kinds of differences do you see in the shape of the tracks and how the animals walked or ran?** Think about the different sizes; the feet that look the same but are different sizes, could the smaller be adolescence or a different species entirely. **You can describe your observations in both words and with sketches.**

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5. On the top floor you will find on wall that is populated by drawers. Pick any set related to the theme of evolution and speciation in this activity. **Describe what you observe, what facts you have learned from it, and how it ties into the theme of evolution.**

6. Pick any exhibit, besides the drawers or any you have already visited, and describe or sketch the exhibit. **What facts have you learned from it and how does it tie into the theme of evolution and speciation?**

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